"They Believed in Their Lord, and We Increased Them in Guidance"

One of the origins of the belief of Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jama'ah is that faith increases with obedience and decreases with sin. Likewise, the obedience of a worshiper to his Lord increases with the increase of his faith, and also, he will be more exposed to committing sins with the decrease of that faith. Therefore, acts of obedience strengthen each other, the same as sins strengthen each other. The obedience of jihad as well as the sin of fleeing on the day of battle are a good example of this matter.

And while a mujahid for the sake of Allah is among the people most exposed to fitnah, with which Satan and his allies try to distract him from practicing this great obedience that is the peak of the religion, he should be the first to seek what helps keep his heart steadfast, and to do all that he can of worship to increase his faith permanently. The matter that will result, eventually, will strengthen within him the reason to carry out jihad. Also, it will help him to stay away from big and small sins. The further he stays away from sins, the further away from the reasons to commit these sins he will remain, including the sin of abandoning jihad for the sake of Allah when it is an obligation for him.

On some occasions, a mujahid for the sake of Allah will find within himself strength and the will to seek shahadah for the sake of Allah, which he will not find on other occasions. He might not know it, but the reason for that is the increase of his faith, by Allah's grace, due to another worship he did, such as prayer, fasting, charity, zikr, obedience, doing good to a Muslim brother, or helping a Muslim brother, or even spiritual deeds like loving Allah and trusting in Him and fearing Him.

Similarly, he might feel lazy and hesitant to practice acts of worship, such as jihad for the sake of Allah, and desire worldly gains. He forgets that the reason for all that is because of sins he previously committed, which weakened his faith in its entirety and resulted in the strengthening of Satan, and increased his inner desires that encourage him to stay away from danger.

Just as the people of mysticism and philosophy lost their way when they made knowing Allah the purpose of the religion, and made worship a mere method to reach that goal, where they thought whoever reaches that is not in need of the method, and they released those whom they think know Allah from practicing the pillars of the religion, Satan uses this method to confuse the mujahidin for the sake of Allah to commit what is close to that misguidance. He, the cursed one, whispers in their ears that when they were chosen by Allah among all His worshipers to carry out jihad, their need to practice other acts of worship becomes less than other humans, and that they are far from falling in apparent and hidden sins. He keeps doing that until some of the mujahidin fall in the evil of this misguidance and do not even realize it until their intention behind carrying out jihad is changed, and his desire for it decreases, or his relationship with the enemies of Allah changes from hate and animosity to likeness and alliance, and in various degrees based on the size of the sins he commits.

Our Lord clarifies for us that His guidance for His worshipers is based on their good deeds, including faith and the amount with which they practice worships, for He says: We narrate unto you their story with truth: Truly they were young men who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance. And We made their hearts firm and strong when they stood up and said: 'Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, never shall we call upon any ilah (god) other than Him; if we did, we should indeed have uttered an enormity in disbelief'" [Al-Kahf: 14-13]. He also says: "And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good" [Al-'Ankabut 69].

Likewise, He clarifies that His unjust worshipers will be deprived of His guidance as much as they disobey Him, to the extent that they will be completely deprived of His guidance when they completely disobey Him. That is His biggest punishment for those who disobey Him in the material world. Allah says: "Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people" [Al-Ma'idah 51]. And He says: "Indeed, Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people" [Al-Munafiqun 6]. And says: "Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people" [Al-Ma'idah 67].

Therefore, once the mujahid realizes that, he should always reflect on himself: if he find in himself the strength and will to practice worship, and sees himself attached to jihad for the sake of Allah, and possesses a desire to gain the hereafter over the material world, then he should thank Allah for helping him to practice worship that strengthen his faith and distance him from committing sins. However, if he finds in himself laziness and a desire for the material world over the hereafter, he should ask for guidance from Allah, seek apparent and hidden worships to help him achieve that, and ask forgiveness from Allah for his sins, hoping that Allah will guide him to the right path.